

FREE UNIVERSITY

150R/40/5

Why? and the beginning

The most painful by-product of "progress" is the loss of community and neighbourhood. In a world of strangers, people retreat into private lives. A sense of belonging to some community is a human need; each tentative emergence from private life firstly involves the seeking-out of others with similar interests and ideas, and then the creation of the means by which these ideas can be realized.

Many initiatives - in the visual arts, writing, science, music, social theory, political action, ... develop along parallel lines but remain isolated. The conditions that would permit true cross-fertilization to take place are new forms of education and spaces in which new activities can be planned.

New forms of education: the Free University aims at an interdisciplinary approach not based on vocational skills, or restricted to a privileged minority. Self-esteem and networks of contacts are usually built up through employment; the Free University intends to show there other ways to do it. We aim to create the conditions in which people from a wide range of backgrounds but common interests can share their knowledge and skills.

An activity space: when the Free University started we intended it to have some sort of public space. A year on, this isn't a lot closer; we are now moving towards larger

meetings in a more comfortable building, but not exactly towards the original target.

Meetings in the Autumn

We are now going to hold meetings every month in the **Scottish Western Motor Club, 14 Queen's Crescent, Woodlands** (off the east end of West Princes Street, a minute from the Georges Cross tube). This is a much bigger and more comfortable venue than the Woodlands Trust office (with a bar, even!) and we hope to have bigger, more open meetings to match. These will alternate between Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons. There will still be smaller meetings in between these monthly ones; details later.

China's (Enterprise) Cultural Revolution: with speakers from the People's Republic of China.

Friday 1st July, 7 pm.

The future scope of the Free University: a special full meeting - newcomers welcome, especially if you have ideas for meetings or new activities.
Saturday 30th July, 2 pm.

Post-feminism or Professionalized Feminism?: a discussion which will include organizers of the '70s Glasgow Women's Centre and more recent generations of women.

Friday 2nd September, 7 pm.

Anyone with ideas or contacts, phone Jenny Turner 031 667 2372 or Nicola

— THE FIRST YEAR —

White 041 331 1768. Also contact one of them, well in advance, if you need crèche facilities.

AIDS Culture: speakers and exact format of this meeting yet to be decided.

Saturday 1st October, 2 pm.

FUP's Year Zero

Most of FUP's meetings in its first year have been on Fridays in the Woodlands Community Trust offices. A number of initiatives have emerged from FUP to continue with varying degrees of autonomy from it - the Autonomous Politics Forum, Community Resistance to the Poll Tax, and the Alternative Garden Festival. The original plans/dreams of the FUP included having our own space; this is no nearer, neither is the cash required to do it.

40's Anarchism:

14 August 1987

A forum of four anarchists active in the 1941-46 period was held in August as a prologue to the Friday Forums. Jimmy and Babs Raeside were over on holiday from Australia and together with Molly and Chas Baird gave an insight into the successes and conflicts of the time. Industrial struggle was carried out with anarchist support against the discipline imposed by the state, management and the "Communist" party alike. It was a time when desertion and resistance to militarism brought many people into contact with libertarian ideas. The meeting was enlivened by the

participation of J.T.Caldwell, a libertarian communist follower of Guy Aldred's U.S.M., and there were lively exchanges on the problems of "leaders" emerging. A C90 cassette tape is being prepared for limited distribution.

Women in Scotland:

Elspeth King, 21 August

Elspeth King is an archivist at the People's Palace. Her talk, which went from the beginnings of Scotland right up to the contemporary women's movement, was supported by slides from the People's Palace collection.

This participant felt that, though interesting enough to watch, this was not a particularly successful meeting. Participants could really only be passive in the face of information ODs, and make blandly supportive noises. This would not matter if this meeting had been one of a series tackling issues of gender; if this had been the case, Elspeth's talk would have been a pleasant and useful introduction. But it was the only meeting to discuss matters of special interest to women in a full year. The Free University seems either uninterested or afraid, or probably both, regarding matters of gender. To find out why and what to do about it should be a priority.

Radical Bookshops

2 October 1987

This discussion was led by Craig from Changes Bookshop. There were two aspects to the discussion:

- a "where we are now" part that aimed to situate radical bookselling, and its

options, in the current political and economic climate;

- a practical aspect, preparing to set up a "support group" for Changes, to be composed of people who, while not being daily involved with the shop, might be able to increase its effectiveness by making contact with outside organizations, suggesting titles that Changes might stock that would interest groups of likely customers, helping with direct mail contacts, and so on. If you're interested in doing any of this, contact:

Jack Campin
76 Armadale Street
Dennistoun
Glasgow G31 2RG
041 556 1878

The general discussion threw up a number of issues the support group need to think about - gay men's books are the single most significant area of stock, in cash terms; Changes did a questionnaire which shows there are several subjects which lots of people want them to stock but nobody actually buys (peace books, for example).

The Poll Tax **16 October 1987**

This meeting wound up in a West End kitchen. Debates centred on resistance strategies and the likely weakening of the strangle-hold of Labourism. [and some useful information on the political aims of the tax - typist]. There was a lively discussion on the merits of stunts like occupying council meetings, with leftists advocating them and libertarian socialists rejecting them as adventurist [I thought people in both groups took both positions - typist]. An organization (autonomous of

the FUP) has been set up to act on this, initially by street canvassing:

Community Resistance
Pigeonhole 30
340 West Princes Street
Glasgow G4 9HF

Mediation/Alienation:

Richard Gunn & Werner Bonefeld,
13 November

This was a two-headed presentation aimed at redefining the Marxist notion of alienation as a means of inventing a new praxis. They were especially opposed to the 'sociological' view of class and instead counterposed class in relation to ideology and subjective allegiance to the dominant way of life. There was great difficulty in following their argument (as published in their journal (see below)

and concrete referents, apart from Italian autonomism, eluded us. There was also much scope for misinterpretation as such a theory was seen by some as a "New Left" labourism free from the culture of class.

Richard and Werner are involved in a journal "of an entirely new type"; they don't edit submissions, they just add page numbers, xerox them and staple them together.

Common Sense
c/- Richard Gunn
Department of Politics
University of Edinburgh
31 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh

Available from Changes, Thins etc. The bit of it the writer of this paragraph least likes is the icky Renaissance death imagery on the cover, which looks like something from a heavy metal album - come on guys!

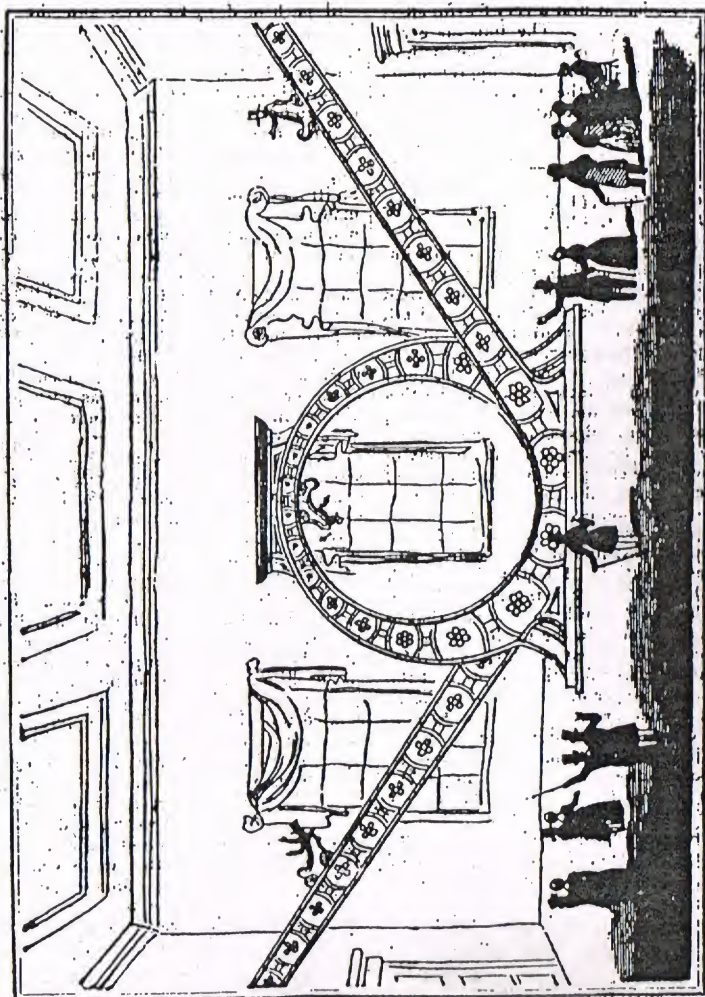
THE PENNY MECHANIC AND CHEMIST.

A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

No. 102,
THIRD SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 24, 1842.

No. 350,
OLD SERIES.



CENTRIFUGAL RAILWAY.

Garden Festivals, Liverpool to Glasgow:

Edith Hamilton, 30 October

Edith is a Glaswegian who has lived in Liverpool for several years. Apart from the information content she provided, much of which is transcribed below, most of the discussion centred around comparing Liverpool with Glasgow and around possibilities for action against the commercial "festival".

.....

Liverpool after the Garden Festival

In 1979, having looked at the German experience, central government saw Garden Festivals as a way of drawing investment into the inner cities. [It would be interesting to know if these plans came from the Department of the Environment, or from the Callaghan or Thatcher governments ...].

After the 1981 riots, the Government managed to get the International Garden Festival awarded to Liverpool. This ensured international funding, unlike the later Stoke festival which was purely national. The changes in local government which were taking place at the same time resulted in confused local reaction/resistance/involvement: Sir Trevor Jones' minority Liberal city council, local unions and community groups all thought there might be something in it for them. The operation was largely guided through the Merseyside Development Corporation and a board overseeing the Festival consisting of appointees of the Secretary of State, including Jones and several Sefton councillors; the Militant-RSL administration which succeeded the Liberal one in 1983 had no representatives. This board was accountable to no local body.

The land on which the Festival would be sited had been previously used as

docklands and by the chemical industry; as in Glasgow, it was derelict and depopulated. Some was owned by the city council but most by the Docks and Harbour Board, which could requisition the council land if it so desired. £29,000,000 of public money was spent on redevelopment.

Admission was set at £3.50 for adults, £2 for children and £12 for a season ticket. After pressure, a "Happy Hour" was also added; £1 entrance from 4pm to 7pm. There was free transport from the city centre but not from the housing schemes. Nobody seemed to know anybody who was working there, and cynicism grew. Several pressure groups were constituted; a *Docklands Action Group*, which was union- and community group-orientated, a *Community Council*, which campaigned on issues of jobs, training, contracts, entrance fees, etc., and a *Tenants' Group*. The DAG publicized the issues and visited London Docklands, but the various interests were diffused and it fragmented. Add a warm summer and opposition melted away.

In reality, however, the expected attendances didn't happen, and the Festival only broke even, taking in £6,000,000 but spending the same on collection and administration. All on-site franchising was done through one firm which went bust at the end. The overall public/private investment ratio was 7 to 1, with £9,000,000 coming in from outside.

The city council had originally contracted with Merseyside Development Corporation that they would take back the site after the Festival and use it partly commercially, partly residentially, and partly as parkland. In the event the council was broke, so this decision has been deferred from 1985 to 1988.

Today there is little left; the land is developed, but there's no industrial development despite the hopes for hi-tech

industry. Apart from some retail warehousing they can't attract commercial development, so it's going to (private) housing. The 6 show houses built for the Festival are on sale for £200,000, but remain unsold. In 1986 the site was given to a company called *Transworld* which went insolvent. The same happened to plans for a marina. Ownership of this land all reverted to the Development Corporation.

Did Merseyside gain? The bodies concerned were unaccountable and could not be audited, so the question of whether the Festival's ends were achieved was never answered.

Planning Glasgow's Festival

Who's Who?

The **Regional Council** has responsibility for strategic planning (re land occupancy), roads, education, sewerage, water and social work. They create a broad-brush Structure Plan.

The **District Council** is the development control authority (they deal initially with planning permission, though the region can call a plan in if they want) and handles housing, cleansing, leisure and recreation. Local plans describe details, but they're vague on the city centre; they are not keen on conservation areas and prefer Merchant Cities. D.Martin is Director of Conservation, J.Reid is Director of Planning.

The **Scottish Development Agency**, reporting to the Scottish Office, tends to be influential when they get involved in projects because they project themselves as experts, bringing in "international consultants".

What is a Garden Festival?

The first one was held by the Nazis in Dortmund in the 1930s, as a job creation measure. Since then they have become popular among planners, architects and the like, partly as a status symbol and partly because they do clear up

wastelands.

There was enthusiasm for them at the English Department of the Environment in the early 80s. The requirements which a site has to satisfy are:

- it should be derelict industrial land close to a city centre
- the reclamation of the land should contribute to inner city redevelopment, alleviating urban blight.

These objectives became central when the "inner city problem" became politically perceptible.

The Princes Dock Site

- 1973 Dock stopped being used for shipping.
- 1978 Clyde Port Authority began filling in the dock.
- 1981 They applied for planning permission to do this, using an agent (D.H.Malcolm). At that time there had been tentative plans to create a marina on the Upper Clyde, but these had been opposed by the CPA as it would be an obstacle to navigation.
- 1982 The CPA applied for planning permission to use the land for a marina and housing. Having ascertained that there would be no hostility to such a change of use, they sought out a purchaser.
- 1984 Ownership had passed to John Laing, though no costs are known. Other cities had seen potential in dockland redevelopment (London, Bristol, Liverpool) along with Government encouragement to alleviate urban blight. Laing appears to foreseen this.

The District Council had tried to get the 1988 Garden Festival for job creation purposes, but on Glasgow Green, which didn't meet with the DoE requirements, whereas Princes Dock did. The Region and District also saw it as balancing their Scottish Exhibition Centre development on the North Bank (built using St.Enoch's Hotel rubble on the old Queen's Dock site). The Government were keen to to be seen to be involved with the Glasgow project, so the SDA

was told to get involved. The only formal objectors to the initial plans were groups like the New Glasgow Society and the Georgian Society.

Having decided on this site, they could have served Laing with a compulsory purchase order, which can be used in matters of public interest; the price would then have been set by the District Valuer. However, the seller can object and the process can get drawn out. So, because there wasn't time for that, they paid "rent" for temporary use of the site by giving Laing six inner-city sites (Crookston, Aitkenhead Road, Kirkston Road, Foresthall Hospital, Carntyne, Springburn Road, Colston, and the area over the old Kingston Dock, now built up). This was their first compromise with private developers about public land development. This "transgression" was perceived as worthwhile because:

- pressure on the green belt would be alleviated by building in the centre
- inner city housing was fashionable
- above all, it might create jobs.

But it meant abandoning other restructuring possibilities planned with public use in mind, like a long Clyde walkway

After the Garden Festival, Laing's will develop houses there; they seem to have, at the least, implicit planning permission for this. Meanwhile the District Council will take 60% of the trees.

Planning in Central Glasgow

In many ways, Glasgow is still paying the price of the postwar planning mistakes; the move of large chunks of the population out into the peripheral schemes has created problems in those areas and also in the areas left behind, the future use of the old inner areas has never really been settled, and the diffusion of population means that the human limits to bureaucratic action (protests, etc.) are largely missing.

No decisions have been taken about how the central area should be; the "Merchant City" exists as an abdication to money interests. On the south of the river, former residential areas (as in

Govan) are turned into small industrial estates. Most recently, the SDA has been buying up land in the Broomielaw, which may be the next area for change. All these developments just happen to people.

The Region closed the Tunnel because it had only 280 regular users (by region) and was therefore uneconomical to run. Similarly the ferries were discontinued. Each such move was done by a salami technique. This was possibly a short-term view, since housing changes would have changed their use. But the temporary bridge costs £1,700,000, with filling-in costs of £700,000. The remaining rotunda buildings were listed, as a rearguard action when the closure was being considered, but the top of the northern one (now in private hands) has been deformed.

Other considerations survive: the crane that George Wyllie used for the straw locomotive remains there for possible defence use, as the only remaining crane that can lift tanks. For the same reason, the Garden Festival Bridge has to be able to be swung out if necessary.

Contact:

The Alternative Garden Festival
c/- Jayne Taylor
52 Cleveland Street
Charing Cross
Glasgow

Beuys and the Greens

27 November

Beuys was one of the founders of the Free International University, whose goal was to be an interdisciplinary organization concerned with the peripheral: countries, regions and unconsidered groups like prisoners and migrant workers. The FIU was one of the founding organizations of the Greens. Beuys was an election candidate for them on several occasions, but left them in 1983 because, like Rudolf Bahro a year later, he felt that they were not sticking to their original principles of fundamental social regeneration, and that they had become accommodationist, orthodox and leftist.

One of Beuys' initiatives was the "oak tree project", in which 7,000 oaks were planted all over Germany. This was intended to reclaim the (Nazi-exploited) symbolism of the oak in an activity whose effects would not be fully visible for 300 years.

Many of Beuys' activities were about redefining what art is (like Marcel Duchamp) and violating the boundaries between art and politics (like the Renaissance hermeticists, David in the French Revolution, and the Russian constructivists).

Paolo Freire and the relevance of his ideas for Scotland:

Gerri and Colin Kirkwood

11 December 1987

Freire coordinated the adult education programme of the popular culture movement in Recife, Brazil, setting up culture circles in slum areas and encouraging popular festivals. He evolved a method of adult literacy

education which treated people as *subjects* instead of *objects*. Colin started with a sketch of Freire's ideas and how these ideas might be adapted from their context of Third World illiterate societies to the task of improving adult literacy in a working-class district of Edinburgh. Gerri went on to describe her work with the Adult Learning Project in Dalry, Edinburgh (starting in 1979). This is the first project in Britain to try to put Freire's ideas into practice in a self-conscious way. Photos are taken of a local environment familiar to the adults in the group. It may be a shopping scene or even a crowd of football fans on TV. This is then 'decoded' by conversation initiated, but not directed, by the technician.

Some people doubted whether the workshop leader could remain value-free in the selection of images and the ensuing conversation. There was discussion about the possibility of taking ideas from the context of Brazilian shanty towns and trying to apply them to the vastly different, albeit post-colonial, Scottish situation. What they have in common is their emphasis on *enabling* as opposed to the more moralistic *instruction* (or *berating*) that most adults find in teaching. What seemed common to both was the theme of a form of language (and therefore a form of culture) that has been suppressed by a centralized imperial voice.

(To find out more about Freire, read his *Cultural Action for Freedom or Pedagogy of the Oppressed*).

Independent film and video in Glasgow from the 30's on: Doug Allan, 18 December

No report on this meeting.

Autonomous Politics Forum

Three discussions have been held since December: an analysis of 60s US leftism (held in Dennistoun), an examination of 1968 focused around the New Statesman special issue (held in Ibrox) and a discussion of two late interviews with Marcuse (held in the West End). The first two meetings contrasted the attachment of past anarchist activists to the period with a distancing from the legacy of 70's activism on the part of those who drew a connection with a new individualism leading to New Right materialism (I think s/he means Jerry Rubin - typist). Yet '68, especially when events outside France are also considered, seems to engender a social hope that resistance could develop in such a rapid and imaginative way. One consensus, though, was that nostalgia was being peddled for dubious motives and that we should be forward-looking in most future discussions.

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF MARCUSE TODAY?

This was the last meeting so far; two interviews from the 1976 and 1978 were chosen as starting points. What emerged was that Marcuse can be seen as the meeting point of red and green ideas. This threw up the question of to what extent his critique of industrial society might be close the anti-technological stance of *fundamentalist* Greens today. Another question that came up is: when do you cease to call yourself a Marxist, or even a socialist, given that Marx becomes more and more one thinker among others to be taken seriously, as opposed to a master thinker above all others? Marcuse did in fact review Rudolf Bahro's *The Alternative* and described this analysis of

actually existing socialism in Eastern Europe as "the most important contribution to Marxist theory and practice to appear in several decades" (harrumph! - typist).

The discussion went on to consider what happens when a sympathetic bureaucracy decides to help a small, evolving group. One participant had been involved with the London Lesbian and Gay Centre and related what happened when the GLC plopped a grant onto them; much disagreement about who, if anyone, was to get wages, and what about new premises ... It seemed to destroy any positive, organic qualities of the organization.

The conclusion of Richard Kearney's 1976 interview (two years before Marcuse's death):

As soon as one problem is solved in a synthesis, new problems are born and and so the process continues without end. The day when men try to identify opposites in an ultimate sense, thus ignoring the inevitable rupture between art and revolutionary praxis, will sound the death-knell for art. Man must never cease to be an artist, to criticize and negate his present self and society, and to project by means of his imagination alternative 'images' of existence. He can never cease to imagine for he can never cease to change.

The Decline of Social Hope: The Pleasure Tendency, 15 January 1988

The Pleasure Tendency are a small group from Leeds who have over the years produced writings which attempt to reinvent a politics of spontaneity (*The Return of the Moral Subject; The Invasion of Exchange; Theses Against Cynicism*)

Their talk went through the ways social hope has been expropriated and destroyed

in the present society; hope invested in the commodity, in labourism, in style politics, in rightism. Ideas for the development of realer hope involved an understanding of individuals as able to act morally and thus as responsible for acting or not acting. Some discussion of good modes of organization: local things, networking, allotments. There was much discussion about the localism of such ideas; they do not offer opportunities for stretching out into global consciousness.

Several women walked out of this discussion because they felt an undertone of crude voluntarism which they interpreted as sexist. Ideas were being put forward which exhorted people to action and seemed to condemn those who are not strong enough to be able to act. It seemed unsatisfactory that a group of three white men should refuse to engage with ideas of split subjective integrity, and should have apparently no consciousness or self-consciousness regarding gender, sexuality or race. The Pleasure Tendency were willing to take up such matters in discussion; but their - and many participants' - inability to see how crucial they are points to enormous sexual-political blind spots in the practice of the Free University.

Pulp Fiction:

Bridget Fowler, 29 January

12 new Mills & Boon books appear each month; every novel becomes a best seller. The transformation of brutal men into tender lovers, the denial of the reality of male hostility towards women, point to such conflict that readers must return to the same text (all the same formula) to be

reconvinced. Or is it revenge? While the hero has been bewilderingly cruel for 185 pages, on page 186 (the second last) he/she realizes that he has actually been suffering horribly with love for her.

The heroine is blessed with an extraordinary innocence which takes care of the messy contradiction between the ideal situation and real life - in which women are presumed guilty of plotting their own rapes or scheming to get a husband. Once women are aware of being suspected, we must try to make ourselves look innocent, and of course in manipulating appearances we we forfeit the very possibility of innocence. Mills & Boon have covered this danger very nicely by using the third person narrative, though the stance is in the first person - "She had no idea how lovely she looked". It must be third person to fulfil this fantasy. The reader becomes schizophrenic in being both the voyeur and the observed. As the formula is already known - even disturbing if changed - the reader is superior to the heroine and so detached from her.

Issues raised and only half answered:

- is there a predominant class of women who read pulp fiction?
- what other sorts of writing can be classed as pulp fiction - for men - westerns, spy books, "nasty" pulp - the titillation of violence and taboo sex?
- why isn't it taken seriously as a cultured phenomenon?
- Packaging of books for a target audience - Virago's "serious" dark green covers with oil paintings.

A strong vote for another, *unstructured*, discussion on this!

The Pleasure Tendency, P.O. Box 109 Leeds.

about the talk about their groups activities ~ topics covered include
 @ how to turn theory into activity 1.
 mono/culture + sub/culture

(Diversification ↔ conformity) 2. *Höflichkeit* 2. *CULTURE*
 Current trends in

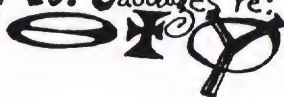
Specialists in isolation 3. *Governing Control* 4. *"a return to Feudalism"*
 4. YUPPY/Lifestyle/Inner City Colonials

5. Television 6. The C.V. mentality and ...

7. The growing tendency toward valuing the person in terms created by advertising agencies and CAREERISTS 8.
 Land & etcetera and all other related intricacies

exchange, value, debt crisis ~ and other negative things.

9. Stonehenge ~ freedom of access/travel 10. Cabbages re:
 Inner-city Pollution /land reclamation



The Politics of Pop:

Simon Frith in *Transmission*, 26 Feb 1988

Behemoth forces beyond the imagining of a heavy-metal lyricist are reshaping the pop music industry. Simon described its former structure from the Fifties on as a meritocratic *pyramid*, where bands start out playing locally and win wider and wider exposure by sheer force of talent, ending as global megastars; perhaps this was always a romanticized picture, but not too misleading until the 80s. Today there is a global *pool* of musicians who can get star treatment overnight if they are seen to have earning potential by the marketing executives of an immensely centralized industry selling to a world market; demand by ordinary punters is irrelevant beyond the very early stages of a band's career, if it counts at all. Hence the new phenomenon of the "star nobody's ever heard of" who gets to number 1 in Britain, Brazil and Belgium simultaneously.

And in this global market vinyl is a commodity of ever-decreasing importance; pop's role in the global economy is also to generate revenues from film, video, sound reproduction gear, TV advertising sound tracks, product endorsements, ... and these increasingly dictate what the music will be like, what the stars' images have to be.

One acute thought from this talk: more than any other event of the 80's, Live Aid pioneered the incorporation of pop into the global megamedia, by showing its potential to grab world visibility for a single product (charity, but it might as well have been Levi 501s).

This was actually good enough to make me forget how cold *Transmission* is - I've

never actually sat in the gutter for a meeting before. Look out for a new book by Simon on this stuff.

Free Unis in the Sixties:

John Latham, 17 February

No report on this.

Computers and People:

26 February

This discussion, led off by Malcolm Dickson, faced a serious problem of mystification; most of the people present were not conversant with the technology, so those who were inevitably seemed to be stuck in the role of Handing Down Knowledge From On High. Malcolm described the changing employment patterns and work practices in the computer industry itself; Jack threw in a large amount of extra material about the political implications of computers and telecommunication networks. Fun as it was, there were too many issues here for the discussion to be as thorough and participatory as it should have been. We need to come back to this and look at some of the issues again, like:

- are computers and networks much use to us in the opposition?
- what is computerization doing to the workplace? (*Processed World* tries to give some answers to this - can their politics be effective?)
- what is the cultural significance of "pop computing" - boys' battle games, the teenage hacker myth, the virus phenomenon?
- privacy and social control - what are They doing with advances in databases, communications and

cryptography? What political impact can non-technologists have on these much-mystified "Duncan Campbell" issues?

- what is the role of the military in all this?

Resistance to World War II:

Pete Grafton, 11 March

This was a bleak meeting. Pete's book *You, You and You!* is a collection of accounts by people who don't match the stereotyped "we were all pulling together like one big happy family" image of Britain under bombardment. I hadn't read it before and found these oral histories a revelation. But the main thrust of Pete's argument was that these massive refusals never had a chance to coalesce into any political formation after 1945, and trickled away into the swamp. No positive lesson emerged. On top of that it was a soaking wet night and one of the smallest meetings we've had.

Lettrsm, Neoism, Situationism:

Stuart Home, 25 March 1988

Stuart Home lives in London where he is involved with *SMILE*, 'the international magazine of multiple origins', and researching Western cultural movements of the past.

This talk was mostly about Neoism and Fluxus, their sources in the avant-garde ethic from dada and surrealism up to situationism; more about these can be found in Stuart's entry to the "Encyclopædia", *Edinburgh Review* 80-81 (June 1988).

In discussing art practices Stuart offered two main questions. *First*, how do we

understand movements that claim to be in some way political, or who, like the situationists, underwent splits between the primarily political and the primarily artistic activists? *Second* - making use of what Pierre Bourdieu lists as determinants of "high" as opposed to "low" art (from the book *Distinction*) - can a work or practice be formally radical when - as is the case with practically all works of the international avant-garde - still completely contained by the gallery system?

Stuart showed a series of Fluxus videos which left some people angry and confused. On the one hand they looked like the emperor's new clothes. On the other, if their makers take them so seriously, what are we missing? Discussion was quite heated, around such topics as elitism, frivolity, artistic imperatives, coterie-mindedness in art and especially decentred art, and the irony of this. Some people also felt the movements under discussion had no way of understanding power; how it is determined by race, sex, and class. These issues were not resolved. There was a quite noticeable split between artists and non-artists.

Law Centres:

Paul Brown, 6 April

This was small meeting in which Paul (now at SCCL) described his work with the Castlemilk Law Centre and the potential of law centres to represent working-class interests. They take an approach to legal practice that gets away from handling individual cases and instead attempts to intervene on behalf of large groups, by such tactics as getting court rulings to establish specific legal

rights for all council tenants and by publishing guides to tenants' rights. These methods have a far greater effect, for example in getting dampness problems fixed and fairer leases agreed, than solicitors' usual individualized approach. Paul gave out a number of the Castlemilk Law Centre's useful publications.

What's Coming Up

Several **Play Readings** have already happened. Contact Alison MacLeod for details of forthcoming ones.

Regular walks: phone Alasdair Gray or Carol Rhodes 041 334 2146 for details (there have been some of these already, the last being a minibusload of us splashing up the Cobbler).

Picnic with the Free University at 1 pm on **Sunday June 26**, in the clearing in the trees at the very top of the hill in Alexandra Park. Bring drums and other musical instruments. If the weather's too Glaswegian this will be at Jack's place (76 Armadale Street, top floor).

Buses: along Alexandra Parade: 51 (orange) from the West End, 38 from the South Side; along Duke Street, 1, 6 or 58 (orange) or 3 (Kelvin) from the West End, 42 or 46 from the South Side - get off near the Mothers Pride bakery and walk up Cumbernauld Road.

Conference on the Poll Tax
City Halls, Candleriggs

Sunday 10 July, 11 am, all day.

This will be a big meeting with all the anti-poll tax groups represented.

PARLIAMENT FROM SCRATCH

This will be a big event early in the

autumn. Details later; contact Pete Kravitz or Jenny Turner.

A Festival of Non-Participation has been (dis)organized by Pete Horobin, The Data Attic, 37 Union Street, Dundee DD1 4BS (0382 27 735) over the last few months.

Forthcoming (non)events include:

- **Fast Days** (November 4, 5 & 6): (non-participate in the exploitation of the 3rd world and tighten your belt in sympathy)
- **Cycle Days** (July 10th and 28th, August 12th): non-participate in the motorization of society.
- **Stay At Home Day** (September 22nd): preferably during working time. Invite a few friends round.
- **THE BURNING** is a statement about marketing issues within the artworld. Instead of being invited to submit works for exhibition and sale, artists will be invited to submit exclusively for destruction by fire. This will thus deprive the art world of potential assets and commodities. The event will take place in Glasgow on a suitable piece of waste ground. Contact Ken Murphy-Roud, 774 Rutherglen Road, Oatlands, Glasgow.

Small Ads

Want to do something constructive?

Seek out small scale design needs of individuals or established organizations; work on solution and costing in small groups; enlist volunteers to make/build. Maybe it's cutprice art, architecture and innovation. Workshop exchange of practical experience - something tangible by Free Uni people. If interested in forming small work groups, or being involved in the construction side, leave your name with Monica McCarey.

Interested in an art/drawing group? Contact Carol Rhodes or Alison MacLeod.

Bike trips? lots of us have got them, let's get out on them. Anything from pootling along the Forth and Clyde Canal to bothy trips. Contact Jack, 041 556 1878.

Jack also wants to hear from anyone who'd like to learn a non-Indo-European language, like Japanese, Malay, Swahili, Tamil or Hungarian. (I used to speak Turkish and wouldn't mind dusting that off either if anyone's interested).

Jim Kelman would like to initiate a writers group/union which would move around Drumchapel, Lynedoch Street, Bridgeton, ...

The Tennis Network is coordinated by Keith Miller, 041 427 6398.

Percussion workshop - contact Jayne Taylor, Flat 1/2, 52 Cleveland Street, Charing Cross, Glasgow G3 7AD.

Also contact Jayne for the French class.

Going Global:

vaguely similar organizations in other places

Learning Alliance
339 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10012, USA
(212) 473 3689

New University
24 South Road
Hockley
Birmingham B18

Free International University (England)
61 Sandmere Road
London SW4 7PG
01 274 4409

Credits

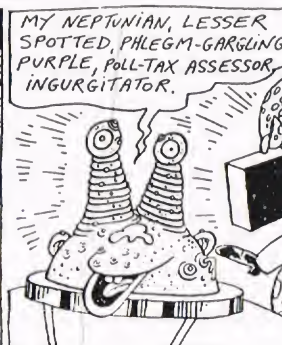
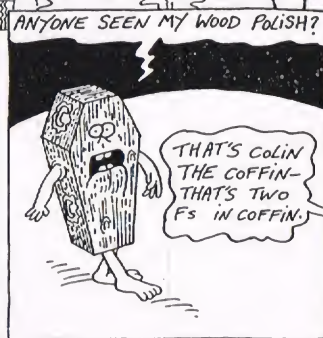
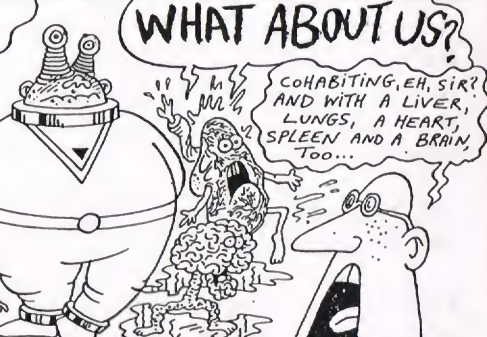
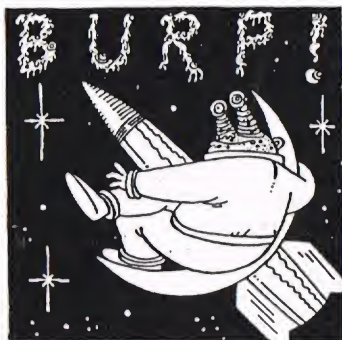
Reviews of meetings by lots of us. Typing and layout (using the WriteNow word processor on an Apple Macintosh, a laser printer, Edding knife and Pritt) and editorial arrogance by Jack. Graphics by Jayne and Jack.

**Free University Project
Pigeonhole 9
340 West Princes Street
Glasgow G4 9HF**

LATE ITEM:

Radical Greens and Municipal Representation

Friday 5 August, 7 pm
Woodlands Trust, top floor, 7 Lynedoch Street, Woodlands
a forum with Brigitta, a councillor for Die Grünen in the Ruhr



1 Democracy
2 Nation
3 Community
4 Person

4 RUSES

NOVEMBER
5
1988

glasgow free uni
invites you to

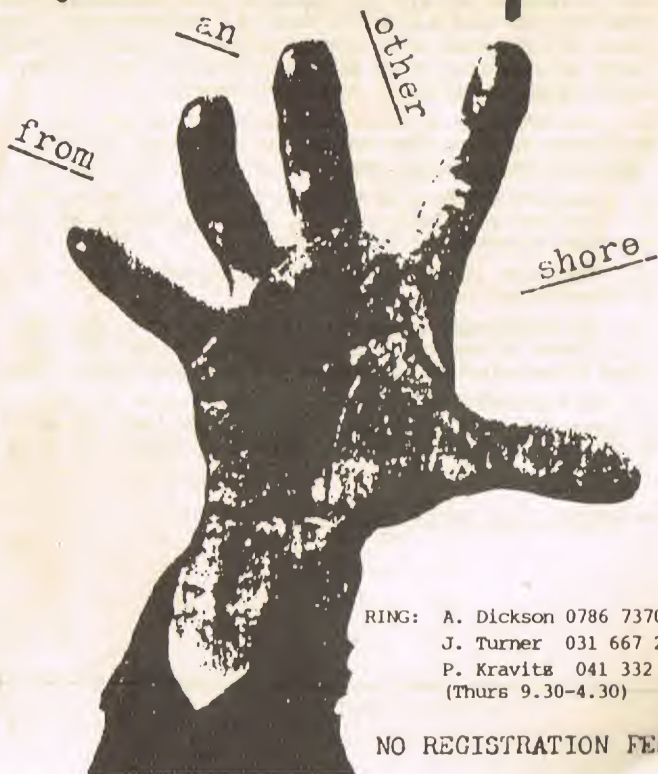
THE VOLUNTEER CENTRE
25/27 Elmbank Street
GLASGOW G2 4PB

9.30-5.30

ALL WELCOME

A Parliament from Scratch

trust
r
recursion
movement
association
respect
self-help
fragments
resilience
confession
guilt
powerlessness
guts
scepticism



RING: A. Dickson 0786 73702
J. Turner 031 667 2372
P. Kravitz 041 332 9797
(Thurs 9.30-4.30)

NO REGISTRATION FEES

MORNING PRE-TEXT

1. This is not an ideology and cannot determine the doings of a government.
2. It is a set of general considerations in terms of which to reflect on such doings and engagements.
3. Human beings are mortal persons whose conduct is composed of chosen responses to their circumstances and who recognise and respect each other as such.
4. We are related, whether or not we want, as competitors or partners in seeking the satisfaction of our desires, which may include benefits to others.
5. We find ourselves joined in local and historical associations, invented by ourselves, which impose laws and conditions upon our possible actions.
6. These conditions range from matters of convention (propriety, taste, etc) to beliefs about absolute moral right and wrong.
7. These include ploys, religious and otherwise, which aim to reconcile us to the mortality and imperfections of being human.
8. This association becomes our culture . It is handed on through education and is always unfinished. But it is pre-eminently a human relationship formed through mutual self-understandings and involves love and friendship among other things.
9. As part and parcel of being human, it is however always precarious.
10. We need to sustain (not replace) it by something less subtle, less demanding and less ambiguous: namely a relationship in terms of rules (laws) which impose on us the obligation to observe certain conditions (as simple as possible) while getting on with our own self-chosen actions, and which impose penalties if we fail to comply.
11. The authority of these laws derives from our recognising the procedures by which they are made or announced, and their content (or 'justice') reflects the character of the culture from which they emerge.
12. They are designed to express, in a simplified manner, those items of a cultural relationship which, if not generally and consistently observed, threaten its dissolution.
13. Governing is having the care and custody of this rule-ordered manner of association.
14. The engagement and action of politics is to consider these terms of civil order in respect of their adequacy to perform their function as human discoveries and adventures get ever more complicated.
15. By this definition, politics is not concerned with the satisfaction of interests, or the pursuit of an ultimate goal, or with the virtuousness of conduct, but with an order composed of simple duties that are good in themselves.

---adapted from several writings

“When the political emerged during the Renaissance from the ecclesiastical spheres, to win renown with Machiavelli, it was at first only a pure game of signs, a pure strategy not burdened with any social or historical 'truth' but, on the contrary, played on the absence of truth (as later did the Jesuits' wordly strategy on the absence of God)...It is since the 18th century and particularly since the Revolution that the political has taken a decisive turn, a social reference. The political became an evocation of the people, the people's will, etc. No longer did it work on signs, but on meaning...Here began the absolute hegemony of the social and the economic, and the compulsion of the political to become the legislative, institutional, executive mirror of the social. The autonomy of the political was inversely proportional to the growing hegemony of the social.”

“As related to the question of women I see arising, under the cover of a relative indifference towards the militance of the first and second generations, an attitude of retreat from sexism (male as well as female) and, gradually, from any kind of anthropomorphism. The fact that this might quickly become another form of spiritualism turning its back on social problems, or else a form of repression ready to support all status quos, should not hide the radicalness of the process. This process could be summarised as an interiorisation of the founding separation of the socio-symbolic contract, as an introduction of its cutting edge into the very interior of every identity, whether subjective, sexual, ideological or so forth.”

"Democracy as technique not ideology!" (texts drawn from J. Baudrillard, J. Kristeva, M. Haraszti, S. Kierkegaard)
"The sceptic keeps his mind continually in suspense; it is this frame of mind that he wills to maintain."

THE FREE UNI:

is an ever changing and varied group of people who started meeting in Glasgow in January 1987.

Aims and proposals include:

1. Formal education fails to encourage enquiry beyond getting academic and vocational certificates; the F.U. is not specialist.
2. Employment traditionally provides status, contact and activity. It need not be the only place for such.
3. Our society is losing any sense of neighbourhood, but a sense of community is a human necessity. We can only be really human when we support, help, learn from and belong to each other as citizens, friends and neighbours. The F.U. aims to create situations in which people can share knowledge, skills and enthusiasms.

PAST MEETINGS HAVE INCLUDED ONES ON:

computers
Hegel
women in Scotland
the Poll Tax
Paulo Friere
radical bookshops
the future for publishing
AIDS culture
law centres
a truce from rape
social hope
Joseph Beuys
Neoism and Fluxus
die Gruenen
Ivan Illych
+ hill walks and picnics

SCRATCHPARK PROGRAMME

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5

9.30-5.30 + optional evening fun

The Volunteer Centre
25/27 Elmbank Street
Glasgow G2 4PB

- 9.45-10.15: tea and coffee in big group
- 10.30 : split into 3 groups depending on surname
A to G in ground floor meeting room
H to M in upstairs conference room
N to Z remain in downstairs parliament
- 11.30 : return to full parliament, tea, coffee, morning debate
- 1pm approx: lunchtime, The Griffin, Griffinette
- 2.00 : return to 3 groups for afternoon discussion
- 3.30 : return to full Parliament
- 5.15 : ends

● MORNING: See inside this leaflet for matter of debate

- redefining politics from first principles
- what will be around in 20 years?
- 'the social' -- movement, association, management enterprise
- families, unions, parties, in and against the state
- integrity and/or the work ethic

● AFTERNOON: experience, anecdotes, reflection

- can we talk about community action as a great thing nowadays?
- how easy is it to talk about feminism nowadays?
- can we even talk about socialism nowadays?
 - State-run integrity operations: radical will in civil service
 - how nations emerge from colonial rule
 - cheap communications: ideas for international networking
 - public/civic/economic spaces occupied or up for grabs
 - men and women, therapy and consciousness raising
 - who wants to rule an independent Scotland?

● WHIPS WILL BE PROVIDED. OTHER ROLES TO BE APPOINTED BY LOT.

- On the evening of Friday (the 4th), 7pm onward, all are welcome at the Transmission Gallery's fifth anniversary opening. Chisholm Street, Glasgow.
- There will be parties on Saturday evening, and walks on Sunday for anybody interested.

And who are we
to talk about such
things?

● FOR MORE INFORMATION RING:

A. Dickson: 0786 73702
J. Turner : 031 667 2372
P. Kravitz: 041 332 9797
ex 429 (Thurs 9.30-4.30)